Christian Community

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Evangelical and Reformed Churches Noted In Study

Seven Evangelical and Reformed Churches were noted in a recent study of *Integration: North and South,* by David Loth and Harold Fleming, published by the Fund for the Republic. Among a larger number of churches named as having achieved inclusiveness within their fellowships are: Pilgrim, Buffalo, New York; Salem, Buffalo, New York; St. Luke's, Lockhaven, Pennsylvania; St. John's, Reading, Pennsylvania; Hough Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio; Christ Church, Philadelphia; and St. Mark's in Milwaukee. It is good to note that these churches have come to the attention of those interested in America's progress toward brotherhood.

Yet this is not the whole story. As our staff travels across the country we

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'I Said There'd Be Trouble, and I Won't Have You Making a Liar Out of Me'

—Norfolk Journal and Guide

CLIMATE OF GOODWILL

By Chester L. Marcus

"One of the greatest contributions the churches can make is to help create the climate of goodwill without which we can do little to solve this great (segregation) problem."

Since the Supreme Court school decisions, this thought as expressed above by Billy Graham has been reiterated again and again by church governing bodies throughout the world. And, despite increased efforts of intimidation, there is growing evidence that local church pastors and lay leaders are accepting the obligation.

Some few churches in the South have opened their membership to all persons regardless of race; in other cities, white and Negro ministerial groups have merged. And church-supported schools, both on the secondary and college level, gradually are being opened to all races.

The picture is not all pleasant, however. Even though most of the large church bodies have called for an end to segregation, local resistance and the lack of firm programs by church leaders have prevented most individual "white" churches from opening their doors to Negroes.

Pressure from influential church members and from entire congregations have forced a number of ministers to give up their pulpits rather than repudiate their convictions and bow to the segregationists. And seldom is there a Klan or a White Citizens' Council meeting without a minister to present the invocation for the blasts of hate that follow. Many prominent church leaders who fill important roles in other fields of community life now are playing into the hands of dispensers of hate by attempting to justify segregation with a variety of excuses. One prominent minister recently said that churches should be segregated and added, "If this be un-Christian, then I'm sorry; but that's the way I feel." Other ministers assume a more vigorous role. One minister in Georgia, for example, is the paid leader of the principal resistance group in the state.

But while the ministers who give aid to segregationists generally claim the headlines, other ministers and local groups are quietly working to create "a climate of goodwill."

Interracial religious meetings are being held, and here and there ministerial groups and individual religious leaders speak out against segregation. Incidents of courage and goodwill gestures are too numerous to list, but several recent instances have figured in the news. In Georgia, church groups spoke out sharply aganist segregation bills passed in the recent legislature and against other abuses in the name of segregation; in Texas, an Episcopal minister faced a mob of howling white people in Mansfield to talk to them of brotherly love; and in Kentucky, the interracial Henderson Ministerial Association urged parents of white students to keep them in school in face of a boycott called by the local resistance group.

Many churches in the North as well as in the South are beginning to implement their policies by welcoming all sincere believers into their worship services without regard to race, and speaking out against bigotry and injustice.

These positive developments go a long way toward creating a "climate of goodwill." If we can create such a climate of goodwill for the majority of our people, the race problem will be greatly diminished.

ANNOUNCE SUMMER INSTITUTES

The Council for Social Action and the Commission on Christian Social Action will conduct jointly three institutes on Christian Social Action in the summer of 1957. Located on the West Coast, in the Midwest, and in New England, they will be well within reach of social action committee members, Guild and Women's Fellowship leaders, laymen and pastors throughout the country.

A feature of each institute will be a series of lectures and discussions on the Basis of Christian Social Action led by an outstanding theologian or teacher of religion. Staff members of the two agencies and other leaders in the various fields of social action will conduct intensive workshop periods on race relations, international affairs, methods, and resources. Special conferences will be held for synodical committee chairmen, state social action chairmen, and other groups.

The dates are as follows: West Coast, San Francisco area (place being arranged), July 9 to 13; Lakeland College, Plymouth, Wisconsin, July 15 to 19; Framingham, Massachusetts, July 23 to 27. Total cost, including room, board, and registration will be $25.

Further details will appear in an early issue of *Christian Community*.

PROGRESS IN SCHOOLS

Approximately 110 tax supported colleges and universities of 208 such schools in the South now admit Negro students in practice or principle. This includes schools in 12 of 17 Southern states. About 100 of these schools have Negroes on their campuses.

All institutions of higher learning in Oklahoma, Missouri, Maryland, West Virginia, and Kentucky operate under non-segregation policies.

The only states which have not admitted Negroes at any level are Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Florida.

At the grade and high school level a Southern School News survey showed that 797 school districts in the South had been desegregated and others with plans to desegregate. This represents an increase of 208 districts since the beginning of the 1955 school year.

EDUCATOR SCORES CONFUSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The late Dr. Charles S. Johnson wrote in the New York *Times* just before his death that the middle of the road philosophy which seems to dominate much of the nation's thinking on matters pertaining to race is due to a confusion of the "moral imperative." Transcending the future of any segment of the population is the fate of constitutional government in America. There can be no middle of the road policy toward morality and legality, if the fabric of our society is to remain inviolate. If there is repudiation of one law which we do not like, why can we not discredit all laws which we do not like?

The arguments being advanced in defense of the "southern way of life" are "illusory" and "reckless," and completely ignore the views of southern Negroes. This, Dr. Johnson states, is part of the "southern way."

He cites as an example efforts to discredit integration by "proving" that Negro children are not as capable intellectually as white children. "It is a tortuous logic that would use the tragic results of inequality to establish the need of continuing it."

Dr. Johnson observes, in this connection, that in the comprehensive intelligence tests for army recruits, Negro recruits from Ohio, where better schools are available, scored higher than white recruits from every state of the South except Florida, where there has been an appreciable migration from the North.

He concludes with the observation that this is not basically a struggle between whites and Negroes, or the North and the South, or between the national and international points of view, but a struggle between those who believe in democracy and those who do not.

Speaking of Books

Although the political campaign is over, the need for responsible political action by Christians is never ended. For those who missed them when they appeared, we suggest three titles which deserve thoughtful attention.

The shortest and simplest is John C. Bennett's *The Christian as a Citizen,* one of the World Christian Books currently being produced by the International Missionary Council and being published by the Association Press (1.25) for translation and distribution in the "younger churches." While prepared for use by persons outside the United States, the principles outlined are relevant to our own situation; and Dr. Bennett's lucid style makes this like his other works a good "find" for laymen and laymen's groups seeking mental and spiritual sustenance.

The second, somewhat longer and written with the American political situation and structure specifically in mind is *Politics for Christians,* by William Muehl, also published by Association Press ($3.00). This deals very concretely with the false leads and problems as well as the basic steps confronting those who take their Christian faith seriously into the political processes of our democratic society. The author is a lawyer and an associate professor at Yale Divinity School.

For those who wish a thoughtful treatment of what the New Testament has to say about the state, a reading of Oscar Cullmann's *The State in the New Testament* (Scribners, $2.50) is rewarding. The author points out the pertinence of Romans and Revelation to each other and the significance of both in the light of Jesus' relation to the Zealots on the one hand and the Roman state on the other.

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The Social Ministry of the Local Church, by Muriel S. Webb (30c) and Margaret Kuhn's *Houses and People* (30c), both published by the Department of Social Welfare of the National Council of Churches are very timely sources of information and guides for study. While the former covers selected phases of the social welfare concern currently emphasized in Protestant churches, Miss Kuhn's booklet deals at greater length with a specific area — that of housing. Both guides were produced, one by an Episcopalian, the other by a Presbyterian social action secretary in consultation with the staffs of the various cooperating denominations in the National Council.

The Problem and the Peril of Abundance

We are entering a new age in the history of mankind. For the first time in human experience it appears possible that enough can be produced to meet the basic needs of man. We may refer to this new period as an age of abundance in contrast with past ages of economic scarcity. The promises of this economy are great but its perils are so real that we cannot evade the challenges which this new age brings to the Christian conscience. To the shallow expression "We never had it so good," the Christian must reply, "We never had such heavy demands upon the Christian conscience."

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We must recognize the fact that even as we complain of problems of "surplus" there are in our own country large numbers of people who do not share in the general abundance. Improved as is the distribution of income in our country and profoundly encouraging as is the substantial increase in the welfare and income of the middle groups in the economic scale, it is still true that about one-fourth of all families in the United States have annual incomes of less than $2,000, not nearly enough to sustain a life of health and hope. Among those whose share in the general abundance is particularly low are most of the smaller scale farm families, some groups of wage-earners, and numbers of recent immigrants and newcomers to our country. Moreover, discrimination and segregation practices against minority races deprive many of their members of the chance to earn a fair share of the fruits of this new age or to contribute in their full measure to the nation's welfare. The Christian conscience in an age of abundance must be troubled until these pockets of want are changed to areas of opportunity.

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As we look beyond the borders of our own country we find a world where millions of people are hungry or ill-fed. No people can call itself Christian, if, possessed of the means to abundance, it fails to exert every effort within its power to relieve want wherever it exists. No people can live in isolated plenty in the midst of a needy world and expect to avoid the withering of its Christian spirit. As stewards of abundance, owing all to God, we must in simple justice and brotherhood share with those in need.

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The above quotations are taken from the MESSAGE adopted by the Third National Study Conference on the Church and Economic Life, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, April 12-15, 1956. Copies of the entire Message with Section Reports may be ordered from the Commission on Christian Social Action at 35 cents each under the title AMERICAN ABUNDANCE.

Evangelical and Reformed Churches Noted In Study

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constantly find congregations proceeding in both community and church programs of integration as a part of their regular ministries. In addition to those listed above, we have recently noted others in Pennsylvania, California, New York, Ohio, Missouri and Wisconsin. One church states on a color picture postcard used in its promotion that "its services, membership, and sacraments are open to all Christians" and that it is "a friendly church providing spiritual guidance for all." Another church, in a border city which is presently undergoing the adjustments of public school desegregation, publicizes in its parish paper a six-week institute on group relations held at the public library.

We are certain there are others about which we do not know. Many pastors do not make such information available, which perhaps indicates that we are moving toward the time when all our churches will minister to all people living in their communities without regard to race—and think nothing of it.

There has been an excellent response by our churches to the statement, "A Christian Approach to Race Relations," adopted by the recent General Synod and made available to the churches. To date we have distributed about 80,000 copies of this statement and orders are coming in daily. Our pastors and church people have expressed appreciation for this statement, and we are pleased that they are finding it useful.

ATTACKS ON NAACP

Many efforts are being made by Southern state governments to establish the racially segregated way of life as "official," and bar all organized opposition against it. These kinds of laws threaten all Americans.

One such bill makes it a crime against the state to support litigation in the courts, which robs many citizens of their constitutional rights. Barratry (instigating litigation on the part of others) is to be punished. It is widely known that these laws are designed to rob the N.A.A.C.P. of its effectiveness.

Today the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People bears the brunt of these attacks; tomorrow it may be any other organization—civic, educational, labor, or even religious—that dares to challenge the validity or justice of the "official" way. The entire nation will lose a part of its liberties if this attempt at thought control succeeds. All organized groups must realize that they face a menace to their freedom of action.

Suggested Reading In Racial Understanding

Integration North and South by David Loth and Harold Fleming, 40c, Meridian Books, 17 Union Square West, New York 3, New York. This is a revealing study of progress in desegregation in education, employment, recreation, health facilities, religion, housing, and public accommodation.

Three Views of the Segregation Decisions, 20c. Faulkner, Mays, and Sims. Southern Regional Council, Atlanta, Georgia. Three thoughtful views of three thoughtful Southerners.

Phylon, Volume XVII, No. 3, 75c. Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia. This journal deals with the economics of prejudice and other important themes.

This month we take account of two seasonal emphases. January 20 to 26 has been designated as Church and Economic Life Week, and February 10 is Race Relations Sunday. Additional copies of the Race Relations Sunday Message, For All — A Non-Segregated Society, *may be secured from the National Council of Churches at 4 cents each, or $2 per hundred.*

Christian Community

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HOW FREE ARE YOU?

This is a good question, but it takes more than a few inches of type to answer it, or even to ask it. We are not going to make the attempt, at least for the present.

But you or your Guild, your Youth Fellowship, Brotherhood or Young Adult group can make a beginning if you get the pamphlet, *How Free Are You?*, produced by the Department of Religious Liberty of the National Council of Churches in cooperation with United Church Women.

Arranged somewhat differently from the usual discussion guide, it raises questions about "who makes up your mind," about the rights of minorities and the limits of dissent, about communism and other pressures to conform, about federal aid to education and about desegregation in the schools, about censorship and civil liberties.

Social action committee chairmen in local churches and Guilds will find this very useful in sparking discussion on freedom and responsibility.

Copies may be secured at 35 cents each, three for one dollar, from the Department of Religious Liberty, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., or from the United Church Women, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

TO MEET IN KANSAS CITY

The Commission on Christian Social Action will have its annual mid-winter meeting at the Muehlebach Hotel, Twelfth and Baltimore Streets, Kansas City, Missouri, on Wednesday and Thursday, January 30 and 31.

Wednesday evening's program will consist of a dinner at Zion Church, Kansas City, Kansas, to which ministers, consistorymen, Guild officers, and other lay leaders of Kansas City Synod are invited. Those planning to attend should notify the Reverend H. W. Rath, pastor, Zion Church, 716 Nebraska Avenue, Kansas City, Kansas, a week before the meeting.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL SECURITY

By Carl W. Campbell

The changes made in the Social Security law by the Amendments of 1956 affect nearly every American family. As members of a large Christian denomination, we all should be familiar with them. This is, therefore, a brief report on the principal changes in the law, prepared with the assistance of Mr. Campbell, Field Representative of the Cleveland-West District office of the Social Security Administration. Further information on these changes may be secured from any one of the more than five hundred Social Security district offices located throughout the nation.

SOCIAL SECURITY FOR THE DISABLED

If a person is now disabled, or becomes disabled in the future, he or she may be eligible for disability payments after June, 1957. These payments will be made if the worker—

- is 50 years of age or older
- has had enough work under the social security law
- is so severely disabled that he is unable to do any substantial work
- has been disabled for at least six months, and the disability is expected to continue indefinitely.

At least five years of work under Social Security in the ten years before the beginning date of the disability are required. In addition, at least 1½ years of this work must have been in the three years before the beginning date of the disability. The law continues without change the "disability freeze" for those people who become disabled prior to age 50 and who meet the requirements which are similar to those for persons 50 or older.

Another change, effective January 1, 1957 will provide for the payment of benefits under certain conditions to a disabled child after the age of 18 if the child became totally disabled before the age of 18.

NEW RETIREMENT AGE FOR WOMEN

Women may now receive monthly payments at the age of 62 if they wish; instead of having to wait until they are 65. The amount of the payment varies as to whether the woman is a wife, a widow or a working woman. The widow receives her full benefit at age 62. The wife and working woman receive a reduced benefit if they file before the age of 65. The amount of the reduction depends on the number of months which will pass after the woman starts getting benefits before she reaches age 65. For example, at the age of 62 a working woman will receive 80% of what she would have received at 65. If she files her application at the age of 63, she gets 86-2/3%. At 64, the amount would be 93-1/3% of the amount payable at 65. The reduction is permanent; the payments after 65 will continue at the reduced rate.

SOCIAL SECURITY FOR FARMERS

The 1956 amendments bring Social Security protection to many more farm families. The self-employed farmer has a new optional method in figuring his earnings for taxable years ending on or after December 31, 1956. This new optional method will normally be used by farmers having gross earnings of $1,800 a year or less. In addition, the amendments will affect persons who farm land on a share basis. These persons will now usually be under Social security.

A farm worker who receives pay of $150 a year or more in cash from the same employer will be under Social Security starting in 1957. Or, if the cash pay to the farm worker is figured on a time basis, and if the worker is employed on 20 days or more, the work counts toward Social Security.

More complete information on how Social Security will affect farm people may be secured at the Social Security district office. Just ask for Pamphlet No. 6—"The Rights of Farm People Under the 1956 Amendments to the Social Security Law."

NEWLY COVERED GROUPS

Beginning January 1, 1956, self- employed attorneys, dentists, osteopaths, veterinarians, chiropractors, naturopaths and optometrists are protected by the Social Security law. Like other self-employed people, they must report their earnings and pay social security self-employment taxes if their net earnings amount to $400 or more in a year.

Also, members of the uniformed services are covered by Social Security beginning with 1957. Only the basic pay received by the servicemen will be subject to tax.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY TAX

The Social Security tax will be increased slightly to pay the added cost of providing disability insurance protection. Starting January 1, 1957, the taxes on the first $4,200 of earnings will be 2¼% for employees, 2¼% for employers and 3⅜% for the self employed.